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DAILY REPORT

THURSDAY
6 AUGUST 1964

SUPPLEMENT

World Reaction Series

NO. 2 -- 1964

FOREIGN RADIO AND PRESS REACTION
TO THE GULF OF TONKIN INCIDENTS

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Based on information available at noon
on 6 August. Press comment derives
mainly from radio sources. In the
interest of brevity, newspapers are
sometimes cited directly.

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S U M M A R Y

Hanoi's immediate propaganda response to the Defense Department announcement of the 4 August naval engagement in the Gulf of Tonkin was to issue an "authorized statement" denouncing the U.S. reports of the incident as an "invention." It was only after this that Hanoi belatedly acknowledged that the first encounter between North Vietnamese patrol boats and the destroyer Maddox had taken place on 2 August. It has persisted in denying that there was any engagement on the 4th, issuing a succession of charges of U.S. "aggressive" actions and progressively expanding its claims regarding the number of American planes shot down in the course of the U.S. air strike against the North Vietnamese bases. The North Vietnamese Government's formal response took the form of two documents--a Foreign Ministry note to the cochairmen and participants of the 1954 Geneva conference and the member countries of the International Supervisory and Control Commission, and a subsequent "government statement." The latter describes the 5 August U.S. air strike as "an extremely dangerous act of war" which violates the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indochina and "further increases the danger" of expanding the war in Indochina and Southeast Asia.

Peking has backed Hanoi's versions of the events in the Gulf of Tonkin, still insisting that the 4 August encounter was a "sheer fabrication" of the United States. The authoritative Chinese Communist response, in the form of a Government statement and a PEOPLE'S DAILY editorial, came almost 20 hours after President Johnson's report on the U.S. action. The language is characteristically sharp--a reference, for example, to the United States going "over the brink of war." Peking's warning of "grave consequences" applies to future U.S. "aggression," not to the action already taken. An ominous-sounding reference to the United States incurring a "blood debt" to the North Vietnamese has a parallel in Peking references in the recent past to a U.S. "blood debt" to the Chinese that will ultimately be paid.

Moscow propaganda has responded with relative moderation. Unlike Asian communist media, Moscow propaganda appears to take cognizance of the limited nature of the U.S. response. The only official Soviet response outside the United Nations is a brief TASS statement on 5 August. There is no Moscow central press editorial so far. The TASS statement ascribes a denunciation of U.S. "aggression" simply to "competent Soviet circles." And in sharp contrast to the Hanoi-Peking insistence that the 4 August naval encounter did not really take place, Moscow states as a fact that the United States sank two North Vietnamese torpedo boats on the 4th. Soviet media have also reported Hanoi's various charges and summarized the Chinese government statement, but sanitized the latter to exclude pledges of Chinese help to the North Vietnamese and an assertion of the obligation of "socialist countries" to help.

Of the European communist radios, available material indicates that Poland and East Germany as well as Yugoslavia have accepted as fact the 4 August encounter in the Gulf of Tonkin but that Prague and Budapest have not. There is general censure of the U.S. air strike, with some suggestions that U.S. domestic political considerations were involved.

Cuba has given voluminous, prominent propaganda play to the American "aggression," highlighted by a Castro-Dorticos statement demanding that the "aggressive hand of U.S. imperialism" be stopped in time and--in typical fashion--finding a parallel with developments at the Bay of Pigs and Guantanamo.

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FAR EAST comment is generally favorable to the U.S. move in Tonkin Gulf, but official statements and limited press and radio comment voice the hope that these developments will not escalate into a larger involvement. South Vietnam's Premier Khanh has urged his country to remain calm despite the critical situation, and leaders in Bangkok have stated that no U.S. military assistance to Thailand is needed. According to a Manila broadcast, the Philippine Government is willing to discharge its responsibilities under SEATO, and Australia and New Zealand both endorse the U.S. move. The absence from Djakarta of Foreign Minister Subandrio has limited official reaction in Indonesia, but in Malaysia government leaders are said to endorse fully the reply to the DRV. Prior to President Johnson's order for retaliatory action, Taipei sources were critical of initial U.S. reaction, but the current U.S. policy is now termed "positive action" in the Taiwan capital. In Tokyo, officials were said to be wary of the possible effects of a U.S. counter-attack, and demonstrations against the U.S. Embassy are reported in Tokyo. Tokyo's ASAHI is quoted as saying that the entire situation in Southeast Asia has for some time been "fraught with danger." South Korea's President has given his full support to President Johnson's move. India, Pakistan, and Ceylon leaders have expressed concern over the Tonkin developments, and Ceylon's Prime Minister is quoted as having said that in accordance with the Geneva Agreements foreign troops should be withdrawn from the area.

West European radio and press sources have followed the Tonkin Gulf developments closely. In Britain, Foreign Secretary Butler has endorsed the U.S. "self-defense" move, and the British press is reported to generally support the U.S. position. The DAILY TELEGRAPH has labeled "absurd" any suggestion that President Johnson's reply to the DRV was influenced by the approaching election. In France, no official reaction has been announced, but "well-informed" sources are quoted as saying the recent events have confirmed the merits of the French proposal for a conference on Indochina. Extensive comment on the events in Southeast Asia has been forthcoming from West Germany where most commentators feel that Peking is the real instigator. Some West German commentators express the belief that the move was intended to call Premier Khrushchev's hand on his position towards Southeast Asia. In Austria, the comment is generally favorable, and in Denmark Foreign Minister Haekkerup has praised President Johnson's reply to North Vietnam.

Latin American and Middle East radios prominently feature reports on Vietnamese developments in their news comments broadcasts but there is virtually no original comment on the subject. In Africa, only Ghana has been heard to comment, in a vein critical of the U.S. action.

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I. COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

A. NORTH VIETNAM

Hanoi responded almost immediately to the Defense Department announcement of the 4 August engagement in the Gulf of Tonkin. The VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY issued an "authorized statement" denouncing the U.S. reports of the incident as "invented and fabricated." This was followed by a Vietnamese People's Army (VPA) statement reviewing recent alleged U.S. aggressive activities against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and acknowledging, for the first time, that the 2 August encounter between DRV patrol boats and the Maddox in fact took place.

Later on the 5th, at a VPA press conference, a spokesman for the Army High Command reiterated the previous VPA statement and then said he had received word after calling the press conference that there had been two U.S. air attacks on the "people's boats and villages." He referred to "extremely serious acts of provocation and sabotage by U.S. imperialism, directly infringing on the DRV's security and territory." He noted the President's statement that the United States did not wish to extend the war to the North and commented that "on the contrary," the U.S. Government was constantly "seeking all means to step up the war of aggression against the DRV."

The VPA spokesman claimed at the news conference that two U.S. planes were brought down and three others damaged. A later VPA communique claimed to have "shot down" five planes, damaged three others, and captured one pilot alive. On 6 August the VIETNAM NEWS AGENCY said that the U.S. Defense Department had identified "two of the pilots on board the five American planes" that were shot down. Later on the 6th, a VPA High Command communique claimed on the basis of "further reports from various units" that eight planes were shot down and three damaged, and identified the captured airman as "an American lieutenant pilot."

The North Vietnam Government's formal response took the form of a Government statement on 6 August and a Foreign Ministry note sent on the 5th to the cochairmen of the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina, the countries that participated in the 1954 conference, and the member countries of the International Supervisory and Control Commission.

The Government statement reiterates Hanoi media's denial of the 4 August incident and refers to the 5 August U.S. air strike as "an extremely serious act of war . . . which violates international law and the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indochina and which further increases the danger of expanding the war in Indochina and Southeast Asia." It characterizes as "most serious" the fact that "U.S. President Johnson himself directly ordered that the U.S. Air Force carry out this attack." The statement warns somewhat vaguely that the U.S. Government "and its lackeys must be held fully responsible for all the serious consequences of their bellicose acts in this region."

In more specific terms, the DRV Foreign Ministry note concludes a review of past U.S. "aggressive" acts--including that of a U.S. plane, type T-28, flying out of Laos to attack a DRV village and border post--with the warning that the U.S. Government, "the Royal Laotian Government, and the South Vietnam Administration" must be held fully responsible for consequences "resulting from their dangerous provocations."

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B. COMMUNIST CHINA

Peking's official comment on the 5 August U.S. retaliatory air strike against North Vietnamese naval targets took the form of a PEOPLE'S DAILY editorial and a Government statement released almost 20 hours after the President's report on the action. Both the statement and the editorial contain a strong restatement of Peking's commitment to the security of the DRV but make no direct threat of counteraction in retaliation for the attack. A warning of "grave consequences" entailed in the U.S. actions is couched in terms of the eventuality of further U.S. "aggression," not in terms of the consequences of actions already taken. The nature of future "aggression" which would bring a GPR response is not defined.

The Government statement describes the U.S. action as one taking the United States "over the 'brink of war'" and as being the "first step in extending the war in Indochina," and claims that "the debt of blood incurred by the United States to the Vietnamese people must be repaid." The phrase "blood debt" has been used in the recent past by Peking to characterize Communist China's own relations with the United States, the sense of the references being that the U.S. "debt" to China will ultimately--in an unspecified future--be repaid.

Prior to its release of the Government statement and the 6 August PEOPLE'S DAILY editorial, Peking reported President Johnson's speech on the U.S. actions against North Vietnam and Secretary McNamara's press conferences detailing the scope of the U.S. actions. While the NCNA report of the President's speech described the air attack as a move to "spread the flames of war to the northern part of Vietnam," it also quoted the President's statement that the United States did not seek a wider war. NCNA claimed that the President's remarks were intended to "intimidate the Vietnamese people" and that the U.S. action was "extremely adventurist" and meant to "enhance" President Johnson's "position in the coming elections." NCNA's account of Secretary McNamara's press conferences included his statement that no further action against North Vietnam was now being taken, that "this is basically only one strike unless there are further unprovoked attacks," and that "Hanoi is not a target."

Peking has reported Hanoi's claim to have downed five U.S. planes. NCNA's report of the McNamara press conferences alleges that the United States lost four planes--two brought down and "two others destroyed."

Peking continues to claim, "as Hanoi does, that the 4 August engagement of North Vietnamese and U.S. vessels was a "sheer fabrication" of the United States. The Government statement notes that the weather in the area placed limitations on visibility; it insists that the United States "cannot bring forward any evidence" to substantiate its story; and it denies that the DRV had "a single war vessel on the waters where the U.S. ships were."

C. MOSCOW

Moscow propaganda has responded with moderation to the events in Southeast Asia, and appears--unlike the Asian communists--to acknowledge and accept the limited nature of the U.S. actions. The restrained character of Moscow's response to the U.S. retaliatory air strike is underlined by the absence to date of a Soviet Government statement on the incident. TASS' review of the Soviet press on 6 August indicates that there has been no Soviet editorial reaction and gives the crisis in Southeast Asia a position of rather low priority--after items on Khrushchev's meetings with farm workers and the text of a joint USSR-U.S.-U.K. statement on the anniversary of the signing of the partial test-ban treaty.

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Moscow's sole official response so far is a brief 5 August TASS statement. The statement quotes "competent Soviet circles" as denouncing U.S. "aggressive actions" and warns that "further rash steps or provocations in that area could cause events capable of converting the incidents that took place there into a broad armed conflict with all the ensuing dangerous consequences. The responsibility for such consequences would, naturally, devolve on the United States of America."

The TASS statement describes both the 5 August strike and the alleged 1 August attack on a DRV village and border post simply as instances of violations of DRV airspace.

The statement does not ascribe to the Johnson Administration a desire to expand the war to the North, nor does it claim that U.S. actions have done so. It specifies only "reactionary forces in the United States and the South Vietnamese military" as the persons who are "clamoring to extend the war" to North Vietnam.

In sharp contrast to Hanoi's and Peking's allegations that the 4 August naval encounter was a U.S. invention, the TASS statement notes as a fact that the United States sank two torpedo boats on the 4th. It states that the Defense Department identified the boats as North Vietnamese. And a Radio Moscow commentary by Vavilov in English to the United Kingdom on the 6th states without crediting the identification to the Defense Department that the United States sank two boats "belonging to the DRV."

The Vavilov commentary recalls the pledge in the USSR-U.S.-U.K. statement on the test-ban treaty anniversary to settle all issues through peaceful negotiations. It asks "U.S. leaders" to "lend an ear" to the warning in the TASS statement--a warning which, it says, "was dictated exclusively" by Soviet "concern for peace."

Moscow has reported both Hanoi's and Western accounts of the events in the crisis. It has noted the CPR's statement supporting the DRV, but without reporting Peking's pledges to help the North Vietnamese oppose U.S. "aggression." TASS' account of the Chinese statement cites the phrase about U.S. imperialism stepping over the "brink of war," but not the reference to socialist countries' obligations to support North Vietnam.

TASS' account of the U.N. Security Council proceedings is predictably slanted with references to U.S. "aggression" and Washington's "version" of the events in the Gulf of Tonkin. But it duly includes--in summarizing Ambassador Stevenson's presentation of the U.S. "version"--the characterization of the U.S. action as "positive and limited" as well as the fact that Stevenson "accused 'communist regimes' of exporting revolution and . . . alleged that the governments of the DRV and the CPR were 'arming bands' in South Vietnam." Ambassador Stevenson was also quoted as having "made assurances that peace and the preservation of the independence of friendly states" was the United States' only goal in Southeast Asia.

D. EUROPEAN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES

Polish and East German as well as Yugoslav media appear to accept the fact that the 4 August naval engagement took place. Prague carefully describes the incidents as U.S. allegations, however, and Budapest speaks of U.S. failure to "prove" the American "charges."

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There is strong general criticism by the bloc radios both of the U.S. actions and the motives behind them. Prague and Warsaw domestic service broadcasts suggest that the United States used the naval encounters as a pretext for attacking North Vietnam. Prague asserts that the "U.S. aggression against the DRV" was part of a "long and carefully prepared plan," and Warsaw complains of a "disproportion" between the "reason given" for the U.S. air strikes and the "brutality of the decision of the U.S. Government." Referring briefly to the fact that U.S. and DRV naval units had "clashed in the Gulf of Tonkin," an East Berlin commentator goes on to imply the United States "plotted this situation" and is "benefiting from it." He cites in this connection various past reports of U.S. plans to attack the DRV.

Budapest, Prague, Warsaw and East Berlin all imply that the decision to make the air strike was motivated by political considerations and was an attempt to undercut "extreme rightwing" critics of U.S. policy. Belgrade comment contains some similar suggestions. One Budapest broadcast cites speculation by "diplomats and journalists" that the "whole affair was set in motion by the extreme right wing without the concurrence of U.S. leaders." It adds that the mild tone of the U.S. and Soviet delegates in the United Nations shows that "the leaders of the two great powers are seeking to forestall an eventual world crisis." A Moscow-dated Budapest dispatch raises the possibility that the United States may be seeking to "test the stability of the political and military alliance between the USSR and the Asian socialist countries."

No monitored reaction from Rumania, Bulgaria, or Albania has been noted as of this writing.

E. CUBA

The U.S. action against the North Vietnamese bases rapidly became the dominant subject of Cuban radio and television comment. According to PRENSA LATINA, all Havana papers reported the "official U.S. aggression" under full-page headlines, with the front pages changed between editions to include the latest reports. Commentators call the U.S. action "undeclared war," "open aggression," and a "cynical attack." All ridicule the U.S. "pretext" of attacks by North Vietnamese patrol boats. A joint statement by Fidel Castro and President Dorticos, transmitted by PRENSA LATINA, condemns the "unjustified attack" by the United States and "indignantly" rejects "the lie fabricated by U.S. Government propaganda" blaming the DRV for the events. Urging that the "aggressive hand of Yankee imperialism" be stopped in time, the statement calls for "unity of all forces of the socialist camp" in support of the DRV.

Most Cuban commentators assert that the entire affair was part of a well-prepared plot in which the appointment of Maxwell Taylor as Ambassador to South Vietnam was one step. Several relate the events to the U.S. presidential election, taking the line that President Johnson, adopting policies of Senator Goldwater, has "fallen into the tragic trap" of "extremists" who accuse him of weakness. The Castro-Dorticos statement compares developments with those at Guantanamo and at Playa Giron, charging that here too the United States used the "pretext" of first accusing the party which was to be the victim of aggression.

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II. NON COMMUNIST C O U N T R I E S

A. ASIA AND THE FAR EAST

SOUTH VIETNAM--The VIETNAM PRESS AGENCY says Premier Khanh issued a statement condemning North Vietnam for continued terroristic activities, and for undertaking the recent actions in the Gulf of Tonkin "on order from the Chinese communists" to enlarge their "aggressive war in Southeast Asia." Khanh urges the people of South Vietnam to remain calm and to "unite into a bloc" to support the armed forces and the government. Khanh concludes with the promise that his government will "speedily take suitable measures" to protect the people and to bring "final victory." According to REUTERS, it is believed in Saigon that the current turn of events will strengthen Khanh's position. Following the first incident in Tonkin Gulf, an editorial in the Saigon TU DO said that the juxtaposition of forces proved that "the USSR will withdraw completely from Southeast Asia and that the United States and Red China will face each other directly."

THAILAND--Prime Minister Thanom told newsmen in Bangkok, AFP reports, that he was "very worried about possible Red Chinese reaction" and wondered how things will finally develop. He also said that Thailand is capable of defending itself and has not asked for American troop reinforcements during the present crisis. AFP quotes Bangkok observers as saying that an expansion of hostilities is not expected because neither the United States nor North Vietnam wants to "risk a general war." REUTERS quotes Foreign Minister Thanat as observing that the U.S. "retaliatory action" was an act of self-defense and not an act of aggression against the DRV, and he expressed the belief that the current action in North Vietnam would not lead to war. He said the U.S. action should be interpreted as a warning to the communists to stop their activities in Laos and South Vietnam. The Bangkok radio announced that the government is fully prepared to face the current situation and it urged the public "not to be too much alarmed."

In an editorial reviewed by AFP, the Chinese-language SIAM STAR says that North Vietnam dared to provoke the United States because of "repeated U.S. timidity" in the face of Cuban provocations such as the water supply cutoff at Guantanamo. The newspaper urged the United States to take the war to North Vietnam, AFP says, because the latter is now unprepared and gambling on American presidential impotence pending the November election. The Bangkok PHIM THAI, according to AFP, called "President Johnson's attack on North Vietnam a violent reaction, although it had the support of the American public."

THE PHILIPPINES--A Manila radio broadcast says that according to Foreign Secretary Mauro Mendez, the Philippines is prepared to discharge its SEATO commitments should it be called to act in connection with the North Vietnamese crisis. In a 6 August CHINA NEWS AGENCY dispatch from Manila, President Macapagal is quoted as saying that he is being briefed constantly on developments in Vietnam, that he will call a meeting of government leaders if necessary, but that he has no plan to convene such a meeting at present. REUTERS quotes Philippine Senate President Ferdinand Marcos as saying that his government would have no objection to the movement of U.S. aircraft from Clark Air Force Base to South Vietnam but "it might be a different matter if these aircraft were to engage in direct operations over North Vietnam out of Philippine bases." REUTERS also says that the Manila press was unanimous in condemning North Vietnam's provocations and in hailing the "swiftness" and "restraint" of America's military reply. Noting that the Maddox was in an "exposed position" in waters surrounded by North Vietnam and Communist Chinese territories, the Manila DAILY MIRROR says according to AFP, it should surprise no one that the ship should meet with such incidents from time to time.

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CAMBODIA--According to an NCNA dispatch from Phnom Penh, the DEPECHE DU CAMBODGE on 4 August stressed in an editorial that the incident in the Gulf of Tonkin is merely another "impudent and arrogant" move on the part of the United States to add to its previous provocations. The editorial says that the U.S. "imperialists" invent all pretexts for invading countries which refuse to follow their lead, and with the Maddox incident they are "seeking all pretexts possible to bring the war to Cambodia and the DRV." This "war mania," the editorial says, "will last as long as the imperialists live." In another comment on the topic, NCNA reports, the same newspaper says that the Tonkin incident is not an isolated act but is "part of a plan of aggression" drawn up at the Honolulu meeting of U.S. military and civilian leaders. The newspaper assails the "escalation" of the present war in South Vietnam and concludes that "new and more serious aggressions by the United States" must be expected.

INDONESIA--AFP reports from Djakarta that in the absence of Foreign Minister Subandrio on vacation in West Java, Indonesian Foreign Office officials have withheld comment on the Gulf of Tonkin incidents. Some officials privately displayed serious concern and dismay at the American action, AFP adds, and they said "this could be the beginning of the end of American influence in Asia." According to NCNA, "Indonesian public leaders" have "sternly denounced" the U.S. provocations against the DRV and have expressed "resolute support for the Vietnamese people." NCNA also says that according to a Djakarta daily, the "Indonesian people and the progressive people the world over" condemn the United States for using the incident as a "pretext" for a direct attack against the DRV.

MALAYSIA--According to a Taipei broadcast, a Malaysian Foreign Office spokesman has said that Malaysia fully supports the American attack on North Vietnamese bases and that the "North Vietnamese deserve every bit of the hammering they got there."

NATIONALIST CHINA--A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Taipei reports, has called the U.S. action a "positive action" and one that "deserves the support of the whole free world." Following the first Maddox incident, Taiwan newspapers, according to the Taipei radio, called the U.S. reaction "rather disappointing" and quoted Clausewitz to the effect that "to adopt a defensive position is to invite an unexpected attack from the enemy." The CENTRAL DAILY NEWS notes that the Tonkin provocation took place "in the wake of Secretary Rusk's warning to North Vietnam and Communist China that the United States is determined to go to war if the situation worsens." Therefore, said the newspaper, this incident indicates how much "contempt the Communists have for U.S. deterrent utterances." Another newspaper quoted by Taipei says that the DRV move "was intended as a test of U.S. determination at a time when General Khanh had called for a northward march."

JAPAN--President Johnson's counterattack order was "within limits . . . inevitable," a government spokesman stated following a meeting attended by Prime Minister Ikeda, Tokyo reports. The spokesman also said his government earnestly hopes that the situation will be eased quickly. In a dispatch carried by KYODO Foreign Office sources were said to be "shocked" over the President's order. Their initial reaction, the news agency says, was one of fear that "more severe retaliatory action" would be taken against North Vietnam in connection with the second attack in the Tonkin Gulf. According to AFP, other Japanese officials expressed the view that an all-out war would not result from the Vietnamese incidents. The JAPAN TIMES reported on 6 August that the Japanese Socialist Party on 5 August issued a statement calling for immediate suspension of "U.S. military attacks on North Vietnamese torpedo boats" and demanding that U.S. military forces not be allowed to use their bases in Japan for operations against North Vietnam.

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According to KYODO, the Japanese Communist Party has called the U.S. action "open aggression" against North Vietnam. KYODO also reports that demonstrations were staged before the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo to protest the American bombing attacks against North Vietnam. KYODO says that there was no serious trouble, but that an 80-man police contingent mounted guard around the embassy.

In a dispatch from Washington, ASAHI writes that Secretary Rusk and other U.S. leaders are carefully trying not to create a "feeling of crisis" among U.S. voters, but says that it is nevertheless anticipated that the incident will trigger another dispute concerning the Johnson administration's policy toward Indochina. In another article, ASAHI says that U.S. Navy Secretary Nitze tried to justify the U.S. action in Tonkin Gulf by saying that there is freedom to act on the open sea, but, the newspaper adds, the U.S. authorities have themselves admitted that the Seventh Fleet was sent "to check the advance of the Pathet Lao in Laos" and that U.S. aircraft have carried out reconnaissance and strafing actions. Such a series of events, ASAHI says, is "fraught with the danger of developing into a situation that could not be dismissed simply as a defensive action on the high seas." The paper urges the U.S. Navy "to act with more prudence in the Tonkin Gulf to avoid starting a war." Tokyo's AKAHATA terms the U.S. claim of self-defense in Tonkin "shameful."

SOUTH KOREA--In South Korea, AFP reports, President Pak Chong-hui has declared "positive support" to the U.S. action in North Vietnam, and in this connection he has sent a letter of reply to President Johnson reflecting the ROK's position. A Seoul radio commentary which expresses support for the U.S. position says that an important consideration is whether the Soviet Union will "bury its differences" with the CPR and come to Peking's assistance. Seoul recalls that some time ago Moscow told Peking that "unless the CPR stops anti-Soviet activities it should not expect the Soviet Union to support it as in the past." Furthermore, the radio says, "the Soviet Union, which wants to play a prominent role as a world peacemaker, is certain to weigh its gains and losses before coming to help Communist China."

INDIA--The Indian Government, PTI reports, is "deeply disturbed" over the latest developments in North Vietnam and it has expressed the hope that the "explosive situation" there would not be further aggravated. PTI also reports that following receipt of President Johnson's message in connection with the Tonkin incidents, a Cabinet emergency committee meeting took place after which a spokesman said "it is imperative that at least the uneasy peace which prevailed in this area before the incidents will immediately be restored." According to a TANYUG dispatch from India, observers in New Delhi were shocked that an "unexplained incident" in the Tonkin Gulf could have justified "Johnson's order," which is almost identical with "a declaration of war on North Vietnam." TANYUG adds that New Delhi observers link the President's move with the approaching U.S. elections.

PAKISTAN--According to the Karachi radio, Foreign Minister Bhutto has said that Pakistan "views with anxiety" the latest developments in Southeast Asia. He said that Pakistan has "special responsibilities" in the region and he recalled that President Ayub has more than once said that Pakistan is "concerned and distressed" over the growing conflict in the area. Bhutto said Pakistan favors resolving the conflict through Geneva conference negotiations, Karachi adds. According to an AFP dispatch from Rawalpindi, Bhutto also expressed concern that "American retaliation" is aggravating the situation.

CEYLON--According to an External Affairs Ministry spokesman quoted by AFP, Prime Minister Bandaranaike has expressed "grave anxiety" over recent Vietnamese develop-

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ments. The spokesman said the Prime Minister had stated in London last month that U.S. forces were being committed to action in behalf of South Vietnam "to a point" that might provoke open war with North Vietnam" and that she drew attention to the danger that the Vietnam conflict "might possibly escalate into a major war among the great powers." The Prime Minister was also quoted as saying that in accordance with the Geneva Agreements, foreign troops should be withdrawn from the area, AFP reports.

OTHER AREAS--AFP reports from Australia that External Affairs Minister Hasluck has said that the U.S. action against support facilities in North Vietnam was "completely justified" and that the United States "could do no less" than take the necessary military measures to protect its naval vessels from attack in international waters. In New Zealand, REUTERS reports from Wellington, Prime Minister Holyoake told Parliament that the U.S. "limited retaliatory action" was "justified under the circumstances." Holyoake expressed concern over the "dangerous situation" in the area, but he said that the solution "lies in the hands of the Communists" and it is for them "to measure the implications of the warning lesson that has been given." According to an NCNA dispatch from Rangoon, public opinion in Burma has "severely condemned" the United States for its "armed provocations" against the DRV. Hong Kong's SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST in an editorial reviewed by AFP said that while America has shown that it is reluctant at present to enlarge the conflict in Vietnam, the provocation of repeated naval attacks "could well lead to a revision of this view."

B. WEST EUROPE

GREAT BRITAIN--Foreign Secretary Butler said American warships attacked in Tonkin Gulf had "every right" to defend themselves, according to REUTERS. "It was an attack on the high seas, and aggression, and it is natural to reply," the Foreign Minister said, adding that "this last American incident was not necessarily dictated by politics."

According to the BBC, there was "general British press support" for the U.S. retaliatory raids on North Vietnam. The DAILY TELEGRAPH writes that the U.S. Government "has earned the right to be trusted now" on the basis of the appropriateness of its action. It added: President Johnson said that America seeks no wider war, and the facts appear to support him. It is absurd to condemn the President's action as influenced by the election campaign; rather we should be thankful that American public opinion is so resolute in the defense of American interests.

The GUARDIAN suggests that the U.S. air attacks and military buildup in Southeast Asia were "long planned" and argues that overwhelming military strength will not bring victory. By large-scale action like the air strike, the U.S. Administration is "dangerously staking its prestige on ventures doomed to failure," the paper says.

The DAILY HERALD believes the U.S. action was drastic, but "understandable."; nobody could expect America to let its warships be shot at with impunity. The TIMES comments that the U.S. operation was conducted with the principle of "minimum force" well in mind, and as a result the Communists were not forced against a wall.

A statement from Bertrand Russell, reported by REUTERS, says the "grave situation" in Vietnam is the result of American refusal to undertake a negotiated settlement of the war in accordance with the Geneva Agreements. President Johnson must have the courage to make peace if he does not wish to destroy humanity to appease Senator Goldwater," Russell said, according to REUTERS.

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FRANCE--Although there has been no monitored official French reaction, AFP quotes "well-informed" sources as saying the events in Tonkin Gulf confirmed the merits of the French proposal for a conference on Indochina. PARIS-JOUR feels that the situation is "much more serious" than Cuba in 1962, according to AFP. L'AUREORE and LE FIGARO view the situation in terms of the Sino-Soviet polemic, and the latter comments that the recent talks between Gromyko and Butler on Laos "clearly showed" the Soviet intention to "keep its distance," AFP reports. The Communist ROMANET stresses that U.S. intervention in an area in which "it has no business" is a violation of international agreements and a source of disorder and war, according to AFP.

WEST GERMANY--It is the consensus of available opinion that Peking is the behind-the-scene initiator of the North Vietnamese attacks and that the torpedoes were directed not primarily at the United States but at peaceful coexistence and Premier Khrushchev. The FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, reviewed by Deutschlandfunk, makes this point and adds that "Moscow and Washington are in contact on this affair." The STUTTGARTER NACHRICHTEN considers that the USSR has accepted the U.S. retaliatory blows in North Vietnam and that Soviet-American relations are not impaired. The ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG believes that Communist China wanted to test American resoluteness and thus the bombing of Vietnamese bases "was justified." A Mainz television correspondent in New York feels a "great personal success" is visible for President Johnson because even Barry Goldwater had to admit that the President acted correctly. Berlin television correspondent Hausen says the "very positive" U.S. action demonstrated that America is no paper tiger.

AUSTRIA--The events are widely reported by Austrian sources and extensive editorial comment is generally favorable. The semiofficial WIENER ZEITUNG feels Peking motivated the North Vietnamese attacks, that these two Communist states want to confront the United States with the choice of withdrawing from Indochina or facing a big war. Questioning whether or not the Chinese will accept President Johnson's statement that the retaliatory blows were limited, the paper says "it gives one a bad feeling to think that it is now primarily up to the Chinese to decide how things are to develop in Southeast Asia."

NEUES OESTERREICH, which feels that the GPR's main objective is to embarrass Moscow, believes that Washington's reaction was "somewhat too violent." The resort to retaliation beyond the point of self-defense "is superfluous and unnecessarily conjures up the danger of a bigger war," according to the paper. DIE PRESSE says the President "displayed statesmanship" in "countering the attempted provocation with determination."

The People's Party VOLKSBLATT says the U.S. Government acted according to "formulas" recommended by Goldwater, but adds that it would be an "oversimplification" to imply that the President took such action merely to gain popular support as a "saviour in the hour of danger." The socialist EXPRESS says that President Johnson's action "fits all too well" into his campaign strategy against Goldwater.

The Socialist ARBEITER-ZEITUNG feels it is "illogical" for North Vietnam, which has so successfully used the weapon of guerrilla warfare against the Americans in South Vietnam, to suddenly choose another weapon which it cannot handle: open naval and aerial warfare.

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PORTUGAL--Commenting on the Maddox incident, DIARIO POPULAR says it would appear that the DRV wanted to increase tension after it had earlier complained about intrusions by U.S. aircraft and ships. The "confused and inexplicable" news about the incident "contradicts" the dominant Western view that Hanoi is afraid of American reprisals because of events in South Vietnam and does not explain why the torpedo boats, which are supposed to have the advantage of surprise, could fail so completely in their objective, the paper says. "Another unexpected note" is the support given by the CPR Government to the Soviet proposal for a 14-nation conference on Laos. The Tonkin Gulf incident could lead one to believe that "others" want to precipitate events which might lead to a global war, DIARIO POPULAR concludes.

BELGIUM--While official comment is still awaited, according to AFP, "diplomatic observers" feel the announcement of U.S. retaliation against North Vietnamese bases is of "some gravity." "Authoritative circles" in Brussels expressed "surprise" at the firm tone of President Johnson's radio-television address, the agency says.

THE NETHERLANDS--It is hoped the incidents in the DRV area will be settled through U.N. intervention and that these events will not drive NATO "into a corner" through an extension of actions beyond Southeast Asia, according to an AFP view of reaction in the Netherlands. "Informed circles" stress the "gravity" of the situation in South Asia and feel that it does not concern the Netherlands from a strictly geographical point of view, but the Dutch Foreign Ministry is "seriously examining" the situation, in the absence of Foreign Minister Luns, who is on a visit to India, the agency says.

DENMARK--Foreign Minister Haekkerup "praised" President Johnson's reaction to the "North Vietnamese provocations" and termed as "of great importance" the President's statement that the U.S. reaction would be limited, REUTERS reports from Copenhagen. The Danish foreign minister also voiced "satisfaction" that the United States immediately requested that the U.N. Security Council be called in and "hoped" the incidents would bring the powers involved to the conference table to "eliminate one of the most serious danger points" threatening world peace.

VATICAN--OSSERVATORE ROMANO says the events in the Tonkin Gulf area "disquieting" and "lead one to think of obscure unknown developments" for the peace of the world, according to REUTERS. The Vatican City newspaper appealed to leaders to work for peace "in this hour of anxiety," REUTERS reports.

C. Other Countries

Major Latin American radios prominently feature reports on Vietnamese developments in their news broadcasts but there is little comment on the topic. A Caracas commentary charges that the Tonkin incident is merely one part of the Communist movement to enslave the world, and the radio says that the free world must unite itself in one bloc and face the communist aggressor. Caracas recalls that "communism backed down" when Russia was told "no" in Cuba; therefore, the radio says, it is also necessary to say "no" to Communist China in the Gulf of Tonkin. The Panama City radio endorses the U.S. move to "defend democracy and the dignity of man," but it says that like the British Government, "we believe that all possible means must be exhausted" to prevent unleashing of a world conflagration. In Africa, only comment from Ghana has thus far been monitored, and this has been critical of the U.S. action in Tonkin, according to an Accra radio press review.

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Middle East radios report on developments, but there is almost no comment. The UAR radio prominently reports Western and Communist news agency accounts of the American attack on DRV bases. The one Cairo radio commentary on the situation is limited to speculation on future developments and concern over its outcome. An AL-JUMHURIYAH article, pointing out that "striking North Vietnam is an old American dream which was not realized until today," observes that the U.S. attack on the DRV bases was "the first real violation of the Geneva agreements, even though not a single article of its provisions has been implemented." The paper, reviewed over the Cairo domestic service, asks whether political expediency or sincere motives were behind President Johnson's decision to attack the DRV, and it concludes that "world peace does not rest in a single person."